

ENERGY TIDBITS

April 2006

USDA Rural Business Cooperative Service requests applications under the Farm Bill for Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Grants and Guaranteed Loans. Through this RFP, the USDA will make loans, loan guarantees, and grants to farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to purchase renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements. \$11.4 million is expected to be available for projects. 75% cost share is required. Responses are due 5/12/06. \$176.5 million is available in guaranteed loan authority. Loan responses are due 7/3/06. <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill/index.html>.

Embrace Your Earth II will be held on April 22, 9:00 – 4:00 at Laker Elementary School in Pigeon. Contact: Kathy Dickens at (989) 453-4605 or e-mail: kdickens@lakerschools.org

United Solar Ovonic will build a manufacturing facility in Greenville, creating 200 jobs directly and another 363 jobs indirectly. In February, a plan was announced to expand United Solar Ovonic's module manufacturing capacity to 300 MW by 2010. The first phase of the expansion plan includes the construction of a manufacturing facility in Greenville with an annual capacity of 50 MW. It is expected to be operational in calendar year 2007. The state and the city of Greenville offered an incentive package worth about \$37 million to persuade United Solar Ovonic to build its plant in Greenville, a city hungry for jobs after Electrolux AB recently closed its plant there. United Solar Ovonic had been considering building its plant in South Carolina.

San Francisco has decided to convert the 6,500 tonnes of faeces produced each year by its canine population into energy. Within the next few months, Norcal Waste, a company that collects the city's rubbish, will begin a pilot program which uses biodegradable bags and carts to gather droppings at a popular dog park. The waste will be put in a digester to create methane gas. This can then be piped directly to gas stoves or heaters or can be used to generate electricity. San Francisco is home to 240,000 dogs and cats.

Smart Commute Week Cookbook developed by Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails, Inc. can be found at <http://www.traversetrails.org/smartcommute/about.htm>.

Photovoltaic Apprentice Training will be held on April 24-28, 9 am-5 pm at the GLREA Energy Center in Dimondale. www.glrea.org/events/main.html

Michigan Jobs from Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, a brief description of the potential jobs impact from a greater reliance on energy efficiency and renewable energy, is available by emailing me at jhsarve@michigan.gov.

Solar Energy in the Classroom Workshop will be held on Saturday, April 29 at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute in Hastings. www.cedarcreekinstitute.org

Standard Offer Program has just been announced by Ontario. The government will set a fixed price for small renewable energy projects. Under the plan, the Ontario Power Authority will purchase electricity produced by wind, biomass, or small hydro at a base price of 11 cents per kWh. The fixed price for solar will be 42 cents per kWh. Over the next 10 years, this will help add up to 1,000 MW of renewable energy to Ontario's electricity supply – enough to power 250,000 homes. www.energy.gov.on.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=english.news&news_id=124&body=yes

Mackinaw City is hosting government officials from around the state on May 18-19 to hear about energy efficiency & renewable energy. <http://www.mackinawcity.org/energybrochure.pdf>

Intermediate Wind Seminar will be held on May 6, 9am-5pm at the GLREA Energy Center in Dimondale. www.glrea.org/events/main.html

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Renewable Fuels Package to improve access to ethanol and biodiesel has been approved by the Michigan House. GM and Ford will produce 650,000 E85 vehicles this year, but currently there are only four gas stations in Michigan that have E85 fuels. The package would provides tax incentives for renewable fuels, give gas stations the opportunity to receive a grant of up to 50% of the total cost for converting an existing gas station to E85 or B5, offer a grant for 50% of the total cost for the construction of a new E85 pump, require state flex fuel vehicles to use the fuels they were designed for, create 10 new renaissance zones in Michigan to be used specifically to increase the supply of E85, and require the Department of Agriculture to test diesel fuels.

Bathroom Light Studies have shown that one of the largest energy savings opportunities for hotel guestrooms is eliminating the extended use of bathroom lights. According to Sunbeam Hospitality and Andis Corp. about 45% of hotel guests leave the bathroom light on as a night light. Research by DOE has shown that products like the Lite-A-Switch (www.liteaswitch.com) permanent night light can reduce energy consumption by up to 50% providing payback in as little as 6 months.

Industrial Technologies Program Specialist Qualification Training describes DOE's specialist qualification training for experts in industrial compressed air, fan, pump, steam, and process heating systems. <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy06osti/39403.pdf>

Delta Institute announces the launch of the Delta P2E2 Center to provide technical assistance and financing for pollution prevention and energy efficiency measures. The Delta P2D2 Center will work with municipal, institutional and manufacturing facilities to conduct investment grade audits. The audits will identify the most promising efficiency measures that will cut costs by saving energy, reducing pollution, eliminating waste, and conserving water. The Delta P2E2 Center will also provide financing to implement agreed upon measures and, where necessary, assist customers in seeking additional financing from its partner, LaSalle Bank. The Delta Institute is a non profit organization that works on improving environmental quality and promoting community and economic development. Support for the Delta P2E2 Center has come from the Joyce Foundation, U.S. EPA, the Great Lakes Protection Fund, and LaSalle Bank. For further information www.p2e2center.org or contact Steve Arwood at stevearwood@hotmail.com or (517) 374-9165.

Festival of Sustainable Living will be held in Rochester Hills on April 29-30. This is a two-day festival featuring workshops, lectures, hands-on demonstrations, children's activities, music, food and fun. Festival Details at www.livinggreenfestival.com. All profits are to be donated to The Oakland Steiner School in Rochester Hills.



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